Summer / Fall 2022 Issue

THE DIFFERENCE



stark community foundation

NONPROFIT FEATURE

A CLOSER LOOK AT CAMP WAKONDA

Summer camps bring together our community's youth with counselors from around the world.

If you travel 30 miles southeast of Canton to Sherrodsville, you'll find a 98-acre campus with 10 cabins, 13 buildings, recreational courts and a football-size field along Leesville Lake. At first glance, that's what makes up Camp Wakonda. But if you look closer and talk to people who have spent time there, it's so much more.

"It's a mix of sanctuary and playground," said Rev. Ben George, pastor and director of Camp Wakonda. "It's a place for play and prayer. Here, you set aside technology and the busyness of life to experience adventure and nature."

For 63 years, Camp Wakonda, a ministry of Canton's Christ Presbyterian Church, has offered retreats for adults and nondenominational summer camps for children of all ages.

CAMP

Summer camps vary in length – ranging from two days to one week – and are centered around different themes for different age groups.

This year's camp offerings were tailored to children's interests, including favorite fandoms, going green, cooking, survival skills, gaming and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics). For the first time, special guest leaders joined each camp to share their unique perspectives and expose campers to different career paths and passions. During the going green camp, biology teachers worked alongside campers to test water and compost, and scout leaders joined the survival skills camp to teach children how to build a fire and cut trails safely.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

YOU ARE THE DIFFERENCE

Your desire to make a lasting difference is inspiring and worth celebrating.

When I think about why Stark Community Foundation is such a special place, my mind immediately goes to the people we serve – individuals, families, businesses and nonprofits like you that day in and day out make a difference in our community.

Each day, our team is inspired by you – your generosity, your passion and your caring spirit. It's not uncommon to hear how you were the difference between someone experiencing homelessness and finding a safe place to sleep. That a student was worried how they would pay their tuition bill until they received a scholarship from your fund that made their last semester of college possible. Or, how your support inspired neighborhood residents to plant a community garden.

The countless stories we hear daily remind us that giving changes lives and our community's future is bright. We feel fortunate for the opportunity to get to know caring people like you and help you on your journey of philanthropy.

With you in mind, we created a new seasonal newsletter, ***The Difference***. Throughout the year, we'll bring this newsletter to your table for you to learn about local people and organizations making a difference in our community. It will also feature valuable giving tools, research reports and recent news to inform, inspire and empower you to be effective with your charitable dollars and support the community you love.

As you read the stories in our first issue, we hope you feel as proud as we do of the collective impact we're having in every corner of Stark County and beyond. When you're finished reading, we invite you to explore our new website at **www.starkcf.org** or give us a call to explore the many ways you can impact our community.

With gratitude,

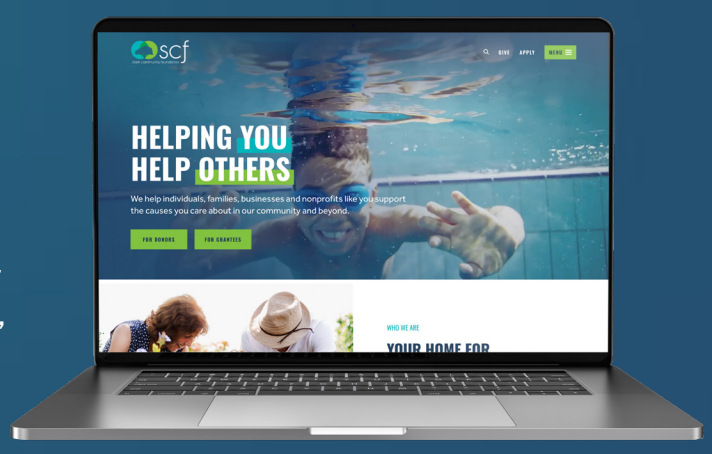
Mark J. Samolczyk
President and CEO

HAVE YOU SEEN OUR NEW WEBSITE?

It's bold, new and improved!

Featuring a modern design, simplified navigation and vibrant photography, our new mobile-responsive site makes it easier for you to learn about how we serve donors, lead community initiatives and collectively impact nonprofits and students.

Check it out at www.starkcf.org



SUMMER / FALL 2022 ISSUE

OUR STAFF

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OUR MISSION

We partner with individuals, families, businesses and nonprofits to help them achieve their charitable goals.

OUR VISION

We seek a thriving, engaged and inclusive community.

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Engage with us on social media

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"I love the place, but more so what it can do for people."

– Rev. Ben George

[continued from cover]

Regardless of a camp's theme, all campers start and end their day with devotion and spend most of their day outside engaging in educational programs and fun activities. Camper fan favorites are hiking, canoeing, swimming, kayaking, tennis, gaga ball, singing and arts and crafts.

"One of my favorite memories from Wakonda is the escape room from a few years ago and how it built community while still being super fun and competitive," said camper Nora Chevraux from Shaker Heights, Ohio.

As a religious camp, one might assume there would be a chapel on the grounds, but there isn't – and for a good reason, too. Camp Wakonda is designed intentionally without a chapel to remind people that worship can happen anywhere, and that there doesn't need to be a specific building, particular time or exact day to connect with God.

"We can experience God's presence not only at camp, but everywhere we go," said George.

CAMPERS

While most campers come from Stark County, other campers travel from Columbus, Cleveland and even other states to spend time at Camp Wakonda. It's common for former campers to send their children to camp, regardless of where they call home today.

"My parents met as counselors at Camp Wakonda, so it was a priority and exciting for them that I was finally old enough to go spend a night at camp," said Romy Anderson, when reminiscing about her earliest memories of camp. "So much so that my Dad made the drive from Celebration, Florida, which is where we lived at the time, to Ohio for my first night at camp. I remember being so excited because they talked about camp so much. It did not disappoint! I had so much fun that I remember hiding tears from my family when they came to pick me up because I didn't want to go back home."

Brooke Bartolone, a camper from Galena, Ohio, shares a similar sentiment about her positive camp experience.

"My friends often ask me why I continue to go back to camp every year despite living a couple of hours away," she said. "I simply can't stay away. I have to go back because of lifelong friendships and endless memories."

COST

It's always been important for Camp Wakonda to intentionally be accessible and affordable for any child who wants to attend.

"We don't want to prohibit anyone from coming because of cost," explained George.

The cost to attend camp varies, ranging from $100 to $435 for a one-week camp. Scholarships are also available thanks to the generous support from donors who make the unique camp experience for children possible.

CREW

The impact of Camp Wakonda not only resonates with its campers, but also the summer counselors and other crew members who lead the camp's programming.

More than 20 seasonal high school and college-aged staff members are hired and trained each year. Through team-building activities, the staff learns how to engage with children, lead conversations and guide campers to try new experiences. For many, they are what make camp so memorable.

"They find their gifts, their abilities and their confidence while working on the front lines with the kids," said George when describing how he views the counselors' experience. "To watch their spiritual and leadership growth ... It's a great joy for me."

Anderson later joined the staff at Camp Wakonda after spending many summers as a camper. She has served as a volunteer, worked in the kitchen and, for the last two years, served as a counselor while studying at Kent State University.

"Camp is like my happy place," she said. "It has been incredible to grow from being the camper getting the advice and guidance from the counselor to becoming the counselor and seeing how much the kids and campers teach me."

Current and former counselors have come from all over the world to live, work and play at Camp Wakonda. There are more than 20 flags that line the inside of the camp lodge, each representing the countries of the past and present counselors. International counselors have come from Mexico, France, Columbia, Sweden, Brazil and Poland to name a few.

"Having international counselors opens up the campers' world and exposes them to other cultures," shared George. "When I hear from alumni they almost always talk about their counselors. Even as adults, they remember distinct memories like their counselor's cabin rituals."

WHAT'S NEXT

Camp Wakonda is currently going through a strategic planning process to develop a five-year roadmap to secure its future of impacting the lives of thousands more campers and counselors alike.

At the end of the summer, the imprint of the campers' footprints on the wood trail will fade, but the memories made around the campfire will continue, the cabin songs will echo in their minds throughout the year and space will be made for next year's flags to be added to the lodge wall. Camp Wakonda will always be a place where so many find friendships, relationships, spiritual connections and a second place to call home.

Learn more at **www.wakondacamp.org**



DONOR STORY

ONDREJAS LEAVES A LEGACY OF LEARNING

When Stephen Joseph Ondrejas, Jr. passed away in 2020, he left a legacy of learning in the communities where he lived and worked.



He dedicated his life to urban planning, education and philanthropy in Ohio and Texas, helping neighborhoods develop strategic plans, teaching the next generation of leaders and growing sustainable organizations.

Early in his career, he served as chief planner for the City of Canton before becoming the director of planning for the City of Wichita Falls, Texas. Ondrejas was elected president of the City Planners Association of Texas where he contributed to the development of the state's urban policies.

With a passion for teaching and inspiring young minds, he taught business for 22 years at a community college in Texas before retiring in 2008. During his time at Del Mar College, more than 4,000 students attended his courses, and he was instrumental in helping 400 students obtain paid internships.

While he explored his charitable vision as part of his estate plans, Ondrejas worked closely with Stark Community Foundation to create three charitable funds to ensure his legacy of learning lived on in perpetuity.

He established the Stephen Joseph Ondrejas, Jr. McKinley High School Centennial Fund to honor his alma mater's 100th anniversary of academic and athletic excellence and help fellow graduates pursue their educational dreams at Stark State College. He also created a charitable fund in memory of his mother that provides renewable scholarships to graduating seniors of McKinley High School.

With a strong interest in theology and theoretical cosmology, Ondrejas established the Lykeion Fund to benefit educational institutions in Canton, Ohio and Corpus Christi, Texas that explore and discuss how the contemporary application of classical Greek thinking can contribute to western civilization.

Three local universities – Kent State University at Stark, Malone University and Walsh University – recently received generous support from the Lykeion Fund to provide programming on their respective campuses.

Kent State University at Stark is planning a fall symposium for area educators to come together to learn and share ideas on teaching ethical and engaged citizenship. Students in Malone's *History of Classical Greece and Rome* class plan to visit the Cleveland Museum of Art to engage with Greek artifacts and art, and Walsh students will benefit from a Greek architecture lecture and a downtown Canton walking tour highlighting Greek architecture and its American adaptations.

It is because of Ondrejas' generosity, passion and commitment to education that students of today and for generations to come will have opportunities for further education and deeper thinking.

NEW STAFF

SCHANDEL JOINS THE FOUNDATION

Casey Schandel was recently named Director of Donor Relations of Stark Community Foundation. In this role, Schandel will oversee the daily stewardship operations of the Foundation and work with donors, their families and professional advisors to achieve their charitable goals.



Schandel comes to the Foundation from the Stark County Catholic Schools, where she served as Director of Development and led their annual giving programs, capital project fundraising and donor relations since 2019. Prior to her time in the school system, she held several senior strategic and management positions in marketing for Innis Maggiore and Whitemyer Advertising.

"Casey's experience in cultivating and stewarding relationships will be a perfect complement to the Foundation's role of partnering with donors in meeting their charitable goals," said Bridgette L. Neisel, vice president of advancement. "We are looking forward to her joining our team."

A resident of Malvern, Schandel graduated cum laude with a bachelor's degree in business administration from Youngstown State University. She is also a certified project management professional through the Project Management Institute.

OUR FAMILY TREE

Seventeen charitable funds were established through Stark Community Foundation from January 1 through June 30, 2022.

Anonymous Fund

Subfunds (6)

College Club of Canton Endowment Fund
The College Club of Canton created an endowment fund to ensure a stream of steady, reliable income would always be available to support its longstanding mission of promoting advanced education. This permanent funding source supports CCC's educational programs and college scholarships for Stark County females.

Don and Phyllis Dickes Community Charitable Fund

Fether Family Foundation
Hilscher-Clarke Electric Company President John Fether and his wife, Jennifer, established a family foundation to impact charitable causes and foster a tradition of giving that can continue for generations. After their passing, their children – Madoc, Wyatt, Brady, Tafft and Piper – will continue their family's legacy of community-mindedness through this foundation.

Denny and Lynne Kolp Charitable Fund
Jackson Township residents Denny and Lynne Kolp established a charitable fund to provide yearly support to causes that matter most to their family. Each year, their fund supports the Paul and Carol David YMCA, MPN Research Foundation, Planned Parenthood, Stark Parks and Stark Community Foundation's Community Charitable Fund to meet Stark County's greatest needs.



Leesa Hall and Donald M. Kurdziel Camp Wakonda Director's Fund
Downtown Canton's Christ Presbyterian Church has played a foundational role in the lives of Lehman High School sweethearts Leesa and Don Kurdziel: first as the place where Leesa shared her deep engagement with the church's youth ministry and Camp Wakonda with Don; and later as the place where the two Ohio State University graduates were married.

With enduring gratitude for the profound influence these experiences continue to have on their spiritual lives, the Kurdziels have established this fund to provide annual support to Christ Presbyterian Church's Camp Wakonda, with each grant to be used at the discretion of the camp's director.

Charles A. and Maria C. McDonald Foundation
Charles and Maria McDonald established a charitable foundation to facilitate their family's philanthropy and to benefit an array of nonprofit organizations locally and in the communities where they live. They want to impact people's lives in a meaningful and positive way and support their family's legacy of giving.



John R. Nichols Charitable Foundation
John Nichols, retired from The Timken Company, established a charitable foundation to support the nonprofits he cares about in Stark County and beyond. After his passing, his foundation will provide long-term support to several causes.



Kathleen S. Nichols Charitable Foundation
Born and raised in Stark County, Kathleen Nichols, retired from Perry Local Schools, established a charitable foundation to support her favorite causes in the community. After her passing, her foundation will provide annual support to several nonprofits.

John Onaitis Memorial Scholarship Fund

YMCA of Western Stark County Endowment Fund
An endowment fund was established by the YMCA of Western Stark County to provide a perpetual source of support for programming that nurtures the potential of kids, promotes healthy living and fosters a sense of social responsibility.

9 ACTS OF KINDNESS

There's no better feeling than when you make someone else's entire day. It can boost your mood and spread positivity to those around you.

If you're in need of inspiration, consider these 9 easy-to-do acts of kindness:

1. Compliment a stranger.
2. Volunteer for a local organization that matters to you.
3. Write a positive online review for a restaurant you love.
4. Collect litter that you see on the ground when you're out and about in your neighborhood or local park.
5. Send a friend a hand-written note and share something they've done that has inspired you.
6. Rake your neighbor's leaves this fall.
7. Buy extra school supplies for a teacher. There are 18 school districts in Stark County, all of which would appreciate your kindness.
8. Donate old blankets and towels to an animal shelter. Stark County Humane Society is always accepting donations.
9. Make a donation to a cause that's important to you.

GOOD COMMUNITY NEWS

Stay up to date with our community's latest news.

SCF RECEIVES NATIONAL RE-ACCREDITATION

Stark Community Foundation is pleased to announce our re-accreditation with National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations®—the highest standards for philanthropic excellence. This voluntary accreditation program affirms that we have sound policies and procedures in place for governance, donor services, investment management, grantmaking and operations. In short, we have met or exceeded the most rigorous benchmarks in philanthropy.





REFUGE OF HOPE OPENS COMMUNITY CARE CENTER

Thanks to support from Stark Community Foundation and other community partners, Refuge of Hope Ministries opened a new Community Care Center this summer on the nonprofit's campus in downtown Canton. The new facility features a medical clinic to serve the underserved, a clothing distribution area where much-needed clothing can be selected by people in our community and a food pantry operated by Urban Ark to benefit men, women and children in need.

19 SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMS RECEIVE SUPPORT

As part of Stark Community Foundation's SummerTime Kids initiative, nearly $40,000 in grants were awarded to area organizations to fund 19 youth summer programs in Stark County. YWCA of Alliance's Summer Explorers program was one of this year's funded programs. The eight-week, hands-on enrichment program is aimed at curbing summer learning loss for Alliance elementary kids. Learn about other unique summer programs receiving support at **www.starkcf.org/stk2022**





REDEVELOPMENT FUND PROVIDES $5 M LOAN

The Stark County Community Redevelopment Fund at Stark Community Foundation recently provided a $5 million loan to the Hall of Fame Resort & Entertainment Company. The redevelopment fund was established by the George H. Deuble Foundation, Hoover Foundation, Stark Community Foundation and Timken Foundation of Canton in 2019 to spur community redevelopment by providing grants and low-interest loans to businesses and nonprofits whose projects will revitalize and strengthen Stark County.

O'JAYS FINAL CONCERT SUPPORTS SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Canton's own The O'Jays are performing with special guest Gladys Knight on September 17 at the Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium as part of their farewell tour. The Pro Football Hall of Fame and Hall of Fame Village will donate $5 for each ticket sold to the O'Jays Scholarship Fund at Stark Community Foundation, which was created in 2005 by the R&B group to support college-bound Stark County students. The fund has awarded nearly $150,000 in scholarships to date. Purchase your ticket at **www.hofvillage.com**



CALENDAR

UPCOMING DATES AND EVENTS

Check out our upcoming grant deadlines and community events.

SEPTEMBER

28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

OCTOBER

						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	1	2	3	4	5

AUG 31
HEALTH FOUNDATION OF GREATER MASSILLON
Fall Grant Deadline

SEPT 2
WILLIAM AND MINNETTE GOLDSMITH FOUNDATION
Grant Deadline

SEPT 21
THE WOMEN'S FUND
2022 Annual Gathering

OCT 14
THE WOMEN'S FUND
Grant Deadline

OCT 20
STARK COUNTY NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
Celebration of Neighborhoods Event

NOV 1
CARROLL COMMUNITY FUND
Fall Grant Deadline

Learn more at www.starkcf.org/deadlines and www.starkcf.org/events

Discover helpful articles, stories and videos on our Heart of Stark blog at www.starkcf.org/blog

INVESTMENT INSIGHT

CAN BOND INVESTORS OUTSMART THE MARKET?

By Frank Valle

While it is generally accepted that successfully and consistently timing the equity market is a loser's bet, the same sentiment is not heard as often in the bond market.

However, timing interest rates is just as difficult as equity markets and can lead to the same patterns of underperformance over multiple market cycles. Nonetheless, the recent rate volatility may be a temptation to shorten duration in anticipation of further rate rises.

Our team recently examined why this strategy could be difficult to execute successfully, and why we recommend that clients stay the course and remain invested in line with their investment policies.

Continue reading at
www.starkcf.org/bond-investors



Frank Valle, CFA, CAIA is a senior research analyst for Stark Community Foundation's investment consulting firm, Marquette Associates.



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COMMUNITY RESEARCH

USING DATA TO DREAM



When Stark Community Foundation released the *Stark County Community Assessment*, it never imagined it would inspire hundreds of middle schoolers to authentically and strategically dream up ideas to improve our community.

TomTod Ideas, a youth development nonprofit based in Canton that works exclusively with middle schoolers, integrates data from the *Stark County Community Assessment* into its programming year-round.

Through in-school classes, after-school clubs and week-long summer camps, middle schoolers are exposed to the needs in their community and encouraged to explore and launch ideas with empathy and imagination to help their community thrive.

"The really exciting part about using community data with middle schoolers is seeing how it provides a fact-based and safe meeting place for middle schoolers to share their personal stories, ask curious questions about the data and express feelings of empathy for each other and their neighbors," said Patrick Gerber, TomTod's team guide and adventure curator.

The ideas middle schoolers dream up to meet our community's needs are equally unique as they are compelling.

After learning about chronic absenteeism rates in Stark County and how students who frequently miss school are at serious risk of falling behind in school, a group of eighth-grade students from Canton City Schools in TomTod's *What If 101* class developed ideas to improve attendance. Students came up with ways to incentivize school attendance and offer families support with barriers to school attendance, including lack of childcare, poor sleep habits and transportation challenges.

While attending TomTod's *Camp What If* in 2021, four local middle school students – Naomi Cain, Alsey Haas, Makynna Watson and Matie Watson – discovered that Stark County's population is diverse, but people tend to live in areas with people of their own race or ethnic background. Inspired to encourage people to understand and celebrate each other's backgrounds and traditions, they came up with an idea to create a cookbook that shares cultural recipes and diverse stories from Stark County residents.

"We believe the best way to discover new cultures, break down stereotypes and build empathy for others is by sharing delicious food and conversation together," said the cookbook team. "Our hope is that this cookbook will be full of meaningful stories and recipes that raise awareness of the diversity in our community."

After meeting weekly during the school year and collecting over 40 recipes and stories from people like Tony Ly from local Asian restaurant Basil *(pictured above with team member Alsey Haas)* and Tracy Foster, owner of Sister's Soul Food, they launched their cookbook during May's First Friday celebration in downtown Canton. They gave away more than 50 copies of their cookbook and published it online at **cookbook.tomtodideas.org**

Through TomTod's programming, our community's students are encouraged to tackle challenges and are provided with connections, resources and mentorship that empower them to feel confident about driving change and making a difference.